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**Kant's *foedus pacificum*:
Path to peace or prolegomena to neoliberalism
and authoritarian corporatist globalization in
contemporary liberal democratic states?**

Abstract

Immanuel Kant's language and concept of *foedus pacificum* (league of peace) combined with his call for a *spirit of trade* promised a prescription for world peace—"seeking to end all wars forever" (Kant, 1795/1983, p. 117). Nation-state level cooperation between liberal democracies has borne out Kant's analysis to some effect. A consequence of the twin pursuits of *foedus pacificum* and *spirit of trade* has ironically resulted in the exploitation of society. Today's international corporations adversely affect public policies ostensibly designed to protect citizens through an anti-democratic market-based ideology within the State—as seen through the lenses of Foucauldian post-structural theory and Debord's society of the spectacle. The author proposes that globalist-corporatist control of governing apparatuses is now exposed for its authoritarian tendencies. This action could result in the ultimate destruction of the representative democratic state with the onset of neoliberalism and authoritarianism.

Keywords: perpetual peace, post-structuralism, spectacle, neoliberalism, authoritarianism

JEL Classification: F55, F68, P17, P48

1. Introduction: The Possibility of Perpetual Peace Under the Current Global World Order

The central theme of this manuscript is to analyze society from the state level through the international system in order to understand the contemporary political economic environment. We will examine its impact on organizations providing public services to the people in democracies. As such, the paper will move toward an interpretative approach encompassing elements of three important discourses. The approaches used analyze primarily critical theory, specifically the market spectacle based on the French Situationist and Marxist scholar, Guy Debord (1967/1995) and the poststructuralist theorist, Michel Foucault (2008) and his concept of neoliberal governmentality. With these theoretical perspectives, we will examine Immanuel Kant's (1795/1983) peace federation as the basis for liberalism theory in order to better understand the contemporary societal impact on international relations and the implications for public policy making in states. There is a discussion of Kant's peace federation concept and his supporters followed by critiques of neoliberalism and globalization supplemented with the scholarly works of Michel Foucault, Guy Debord, and more recently, Stephen Hartnett and Laura Stengrim (2006). The paper will conclude with an analysis of Kant's *foedus pacificum* concept and its implications for public policy as to what constitutes a democratic state.

In the sections that follow we will be examining first Kant's vision of perpetual peace and the rise of liberal-democratic states constituting the basis for liberalism theory in international relations theory from the late eighteenth century to the present. Secondly, we analyze the implementation of Kant's philosophical ideas as manifested by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson at the conclusion of World War I that resulted in Wilson's Fourteen Points and the origins of the League of Nations (Kane, 2012). Wilson's work is instructive and important as it set the world diplomatic efforts on a course in attempting to achieve Kant's vision of perpetual peace on a global scale. Third, we explore Kant's conception of the "spirit of trade"—or international capitalism—as an economic system by which to achieve Kant's peace through global democratic states adhering to the liberalism track. This is followed by a post-structuralist theoretical critique of liberalism, its variations, and the development and corrosive nature of neoliberalism. Finally, a Marxist-based critical theoretical perspective based on Debord's (1967/1994) *Society of the Spectacle* is utilized to expose the hidden-ness of neoliberalism and its anti-democratic nature that leads to economic exploitation of the masses without their awareness of the cause and effects of neoliberalism. Public policies are implemented to the detriment of the people under the covert nature of neoliberalism as presented by Foucauldian and Debordian theoretical critiques.

2. Kant's Philosophical Vision of Perpetual Peace and Temporal/Spatial Considerations

Traditional, or classical, international relations theory is generally categorized as belonging to three dominant paradigms: realism, liberalism, and socialism (Der Derrian, 1997; Doyle and Ikenberry, 1997). In this essay, we will be examining the implications of liberalism—from the international relations literature—on people dwelling within liberal states' borders and people affected by the phenomenon of liberalism internationally through critical and post-structural lenses. Domestic political considerations on all manner of international relations theoretical interpretations, including liberalism, are increasingly pursued to gain better understanding (Evangelista, 1997). Kant was one of the primary philosophers laid the foundation for modern liberal international relations theory. During Kant's time, liberalism was the primary challenge to the monarchical state. Europe had long engaged in wars between nation-states controlled by autocrats who were subsequently challenged by the merchant class. This "revolutionary" ideology based on individual freedom and free market principles "was never a doctrine of the Left; it was always the quintessential centrist doctrine" whose "advocates were sure of their moderation, their wisdom, and their humanity" reckoning themselves to be somewhere in the middle of the ideological spectrum (Wallerstein, 1995, pp.1–2). The liberal doctrine became part and parcel of a new class of rulers—now the mercantile class—supplanting the old monarchical and aristocratic system. Liberalism as a philosophy is perpetuated by Kant and is formulated and summed as follows with regard to his notion of a league of peace:

SECOND DEFINITIVE ARTICLE FOR A PERPETUAL PEACE

The right of nations shall be founded on a "federation of free states"

[336] [...] A league of a special sort, must therefore be established, one that we can call a league of peace (*foedus pacificum*), and which will be distinguished from a *treaty of peace* (*pactum pacis*) because the latter seeks merely to stop one war, while the former seeks to end all wars forever. This league does not seek any power of the sort possessed by nations, but only the maintenance and security of each nation's own freedom, as well as that of the other nations leagued with it, without their having thereby to subject themselves to civil laws and their constraints (as men in the state of nature must do). It can be shown that this *idea of federalism* should eventually include all nations and thus lead to perpetual peace. For if good fortune should so dispose matters that a powerful and enlightened people should form a republic (which by its nature must be inclined to seek perpetual peace), it will provide a focal point for a federal association among other nations that will join it in order to guarantee a state of peace among nations that is in accord with the idea of the right of nations, and through several associations of this sort such a federation can extend further and further [...]. [357] Reason can provide related nations with no other means for emerging from the state of lawlessness, which consists solely of war, than that they give up their

savage (lawless) freedom, just as individual persons do, and by accommodating themselves to the constraints of common law, establish a nation of peoples (*civitas gentium*) that (continually growing) will finally include all the people of the earth. (Kant, 1795/1983, p. 117, italics in the original)

Kant analyzed the international relations system of his day and theorized that over time more democracies with liberal economic trading tendencies would increase. The accumulation of such states would lead to peace in international relations—at least between likely politically and economically structured states. To date, other than relatively minor skirmishes between such nations, war has not occurred between liberal states and “have strengthened the prospects for a world peace established by the steady expansion of a separate peace” among them, although not between liberals and non-liberals (Doyle, 1997, p. 252). Kant’s vision at first glance appears to have withstood the test of time as liberal international principles “have created incentives for a separate peace among Liberal states, for aggression against non-Liberals, and for compliance in vital matters of security and economic cooperation” (pp. 258–259; Doyle, 2006). Doyle (2005) further extends Kant’s vision of modern liberalism to include three pillars: (1) republican representation; (2) an ideological commitment to fundamental human rights; and, (3) transnational interdependence. The ideas of liberalism are “together (and only together) the three specific strands of liberal institutions, liberal ideas, and transnational ties plausibly connect the characteristics of liberal politics and economies with sustained liberal peace” (p. 465). The Liberal State within the international system under Kant’s interpretation is “[...] an institution that makes a systematic difference to what is morally permissible for ordinary moral agents to do” and “that people [within the State] have a duty to see to it such an organization comes into existence” (Waldron, 2006, p. 183). This implies that people living in the State must be in compliance with its laws and policies with legitimate, formal authority (p. 197).

In the next section we will examine the impact of the implementation of Kant’s concept of perpetual peace in U.S. foreign policy post World War I. As a political science scholar—the only such academic to become president of the U.S.—Woodrow Wilson brought forward Kant’s perpetual peace concepts to bear on the post war period. While President Wilson largely failed in much of his endeavor, he was successful in legitimizing Kantian principles in international relations. This effort has implications for contemporary global politics.

3. President Woodrow Wilson and Kantian Influences

The United States has long been a proponent of Kant’s vision of establishing peace through his principles as indicated by President Woodrow Wilson who wrote his Fourteen Points for peace at the conclusion of World War I. His approach to foreign affairs is summed here as

Though it be true that democratic government will make wars less likely, it will notion the individual states, but eliminate all causes of conflict between nations, and if the enormous sacrifices of this war are not to be made in vain, not merely must democracy triumph in the individual states, but in the society of states as well.

The development of modern democracy has meant two things: equality of rights and the assurance of those rights through popular control of government. Within the individual states special privilege has steadily been replaced by equality of men before the law, and the right of a few to administer government as their private possession has made way for the conception that the whole people has the right to direct government for the welfare of all. To put it another way, democracy may be regarded as the realization of human rights through the agency of government in channels determined by the popular will. (1918/1992, p. 268)

Despite the fact Wilson was unable to get the US Senate to ratify the treaty for the US into the League of Nations, his Kantian-inspired prose found its way into the Treaty of Versailles. Rhetorically, at least, the concept of peace federations made it into U.S. foreign policy parlance and, of course, the League of Nations developed a precedent to be followed and after the Second World War with the eventual creation of the United Nations. By this time, the U.S. became a world leader culminating into the preeminent power later by the end of the Second World War to the present day as an exemplar of a liberal-democratic state.

4. Emphasis on Capitalism

The second and equally important component of Kant's essays pertaining to economic liberalism and globalization deserves more scrutiny. Kant's concept of the *spirit of trade* is more complex and troubling as the practice of free trade

[367] [...] cannot coexist with war, and sooner or later this spirit dominates every people. For among those powers (or means) that belong to a nation, financial power may be the most reliable in forcing nations pursue the noble cause of peace (though not from moral motives); and wherever in the world war threatens to break out, they will try to head it off through mediation, just as if they were permanently leagued for this purpose. By the very nature of things, large alliances for [purposes of waging] war are very rare and are even more rarely successful. In this fashion nature guarantees perpetual peace by virtue of the mechanism of man's inclinations themselves; to be sure, it does not do so with a certainty sufficient to *prophesy* it from a theoretical point of view, but we can do so from a practical one, which makes it our duty to work toward bringing about this goal (which is not a chimerical one). (Kant, 1795/1983, p. 125)

Kant's notion of practicality in which he derived his theory supports capitalism and all of its effects on human society. Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter

(1919/1992) echoed Kant in advocating for a purely capitalist world that would deny imperialist impulses and cites these facts to support his theory:

1. Throughout the world of capitalism, and specifically among the elements formed by capitalism in modern social life, there has arisen a fundamental opposition to war, expansion, cabinet diplomacy, armaments, and socially-entrenched professional armies [...] modern pacifism, in its political foundations if not its derivation, is unquestionably a phenomenon of the capitalist world.
2. Wherever capitalism penetrated, peace parties of such strength arose that virtually every war meant a political struggle of the domestic scene [...]. No people and no ruling class today can openly afford to regard war as a normal state of affairs or a normal element in the life of nations.
3. The type of industrial worker created by capitalism is always vigorously anti-imperialist.
4. Despite manifest resistance on the part of powerful elements, the capitalist age has seen the development of methods for preventing war, for the peaceful settlement of disputes among states.
5. Among all capitalist economies, that of the United States is least burdened with precapitalist elements, survivals, reminiscences and power factors...[and] is likely to exhibit the weakest imperialist trend. (pp. 220–222)

Schumpeter posited that capitalism is by its very nature anti-imperialist and, in essence, supports Kant's idealism for a peace federation. The evidence marshaled by proponents such as Woodrow Wilson and Joseph Schumpeter for liberal economic systems appears convincing. However, Foucault (2008) criticizes Kant's utopian concept and Debord (1967/1995) deconstructs further modern capitalist ideology in the *Society of the Spectacle* with its propensity to overshadow, overtake, and eventually undermine democracy as we will see subsequently. The problems of implementation of Kant's theoretical concept into actual public policy-making were not yet fully apparent in Kant's and Schumpeter's time most especially on a global scale.

5. Critique of Liberalism and Kantian Connections: Post-Structuralism and Foucault's Liberal Utopias

Michel Foucault (2008) on Kant's vision of perpetual peace is that it is an appearance of governmental rationality based on the nature of man that encompasses:

1. Men can have relations of exchange with each other individually, supported by property, etcetera, and this prescription or precept of nature will be taken up in legal obligations and become civil law.
2. Commercial relationships cross the world, just as nature intended, and to the same extent as nature intended the whole world to be populated, and this will constitute cosmopolitan law or commercial law [...]. Perpetual peace is guaranteed by nature and this guarantee is manifested in the population of the entire world and in the commercial relationships stretching across the whole world. *The guarantee of perpetual peace is therefore actually commercial globalization* (p. 57, italics added for emphasis).

Foucault objected to Kant's (and Adam Smith's) political calculations for liberalism on historical grounds and cites the internecine problems of Europe and the failure of the Congress of Vienna, for example, and the attempt to put to an end Napoleon's imperialist designs. This brought about equilibrium between Austria and England, all based on the principle of the European market. Foucault then analyzed the political doctrine of liberalism in Germany and the U.S. and describes it as "enlightened despotism" (2008, p. 61). Liberalism thus practiced as described by Foucault is "the art of government formed in the eighteenth century [that] entails at its heart a productive/destructive relationship [with] freedom. [It] must produce freedom, but this very act entails the establishment of limitations, controls, forms of coercion, and obligations relying on threats..." in favor of free trade over democratic values (p. 64). The art of government under such a regime favors commercial interests as against labor where "the freedom of the workers must not become a danger for the enterprise and production" and the central problem of liberalism is "the economy of power" by the "interplay between freedom and security" (p. 65).

Foucault spoke of other issues afflicting liberalism. He credited Bentham for his invention of the Panopticon and its use for the "formula of liberal government" whereby the workers in the economy would be supervised for the profitability and labor activity with control being the mainspring as the counterweight of freedom of action (pp. 66–67). Another form of crisis is

[...] the inflation of the compensatory mechanisms of freedom. That is to say, for the exercise of some of some freedom, like that of the freedom of the market and anti-monopoly legislation, for example, you could have the formation of a legislative straitjacket which the market partners experience as excessive interventionism and excessive constraint and coercion. At a much more local level, you have everything which takes on the appearance of revolt and rejection of the world of the disciplines. Finally and above all, there are processes of clogging such that the mechanisms for producing freedom, precisely those that are called upon to manufacture this freedom, actually produce destructive effects which prevail over the very freedom they are supposed to procure. This is, if you like, the ambiguity of all the devices which could be called "liberogenic," that is to say, devices intended to produce freedom which potentially risk producing ex-

actly the opposite [...]. This is precisely the present crisis of liberalism. (pp. 68–69, italics added for emphasis)

Liberalism thus conceived by Foucault lays the groundwork for the twentieth century phenomenon constituted and known today as neoliberalism. Lemke (2001) (on Foucault) discussing the Ordo-liberals, founders of a version of neoliberalism, notes:

Foucault points out that the constructivist and anti-naturalist thrust of the Ordo-liberal project [from the Freiburg School of Wilhelm Röpke, Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm, Alexander Rüstow, and Alfred Müller-Armack, who were proponents of social market theory] cannot be separated from the special historical situation in post-war Germany. The notion of an open economic domain that is created only by incessant social intervention served as political legitimization for the newly founded second German republic. Unlike classical liberalism, the Ordo-liberals did not face the problem of how to establish sufficient market freedoms within an existing state. Instead, the question they faced was how a state could be created on the basis of economic liberty, whereby the latter doubles up as the principle of state legitimization and state self-delineation. In other words, what is involved is not the legitimization of an already extant state, but a form of legitimization that founds a state: the economic liberty produces the legitimacy for a form of sovereignty limited to guaranteeing economic activity (p. 196).

Lemke explains that Foucault, when describing the differences of neoliberalism between the Freiburg and Chicago schools “the US neo-liberals attempt[ed] to redefine the social sphere as a form of the economic domain,” thus, the government becomes an enabler, or an enterprise itself, fostering market-based systems of social and economic relations of individuals, groups, and institutions encompassing all human interaction (2001, p. 197). Foucault (2008) described the Chicago School variant as the “anarcho-liberal American form” (p. 117) or as “American liberal utopians” (p. 179). He traced the development of the Chicago School through Ordo-liberal emissaries such as Friedrich von Hayek and Ludwig von Mises (p. 161) in the twentieth century. Following Foucault, Lemke (2001) submits that the American neoliberal

[...] governmentality not only focuses on the integral link between micro- and macro-political levels (e.g. globalization or competition for ‘attractive’ sites for companies and personal imperatives as regards beauty or a regimented diet), it also highlights the intimate relationship between ‘ideological’ and ‘political-economic’ agencies (e.g. the semantics of flexibility and the introduction of new structures of production). This enables us to shed sharper light on the effects neo-liberal governmentality has in terms of (self-) regulation and domination. These effects entail not just the simple reproduction of existing social asymmetries or their ideological obfuscation, but are the product of a re-coding of social mechanisms of exploitation and domination on the basis of a new topography of the social domain. (p. 203)

Foucault (2008) stated the problematic of the economy in that “Liberalism acquired its modern shape precisely with the formulation of [the] essential incompatibility between the non-totalizable multiplicity of economic subjects of interest and the totalizing unity of the juridical sovereign [the government of the State]” as *there is no sovereign in economics* (pp. 282–283). Invoking the philosopher, Adam Ferguson, civil society, inseparable to the economic structure, is also a transactional reality under liberalism that is self-limited as it is “pegged to the specificity of economic processes” within the State (Foucault, 2008, p. 297). He noted, in contrast, that civil society has non-egoistic interests that bring people together separately and distinctly, bonding them together, that is different from purely economic transactional relations (p. 301). Foucault stated further that there is a paradoxical relationship between liberal economic rationalism and civil society as one moves towards an economic state in that “the constitutive bond of civil society is weakened and the more the individual is isolated by the economic bond he has with everyone and anyone” (p. 303). Foucault unraveled the constitutive elements of society in order to reveal structures that affect governmentality of the State.

6. The Critical Lens Focused on Neoliberalism

In a consumerist society, the sounds of the scurrying and scampering feet of time hammer home one message: it is not just the things you are uncertain about that require your immediate attention, but things you do not yet know you are uncertain about. This sounds an ultimate, irrevocable and unmistakable death knell to all and any certainty. All certainty being putative and at best until further notice, all self-confidence being a product of insufficient attention or downright ignorance, the most treacherous variety of uncertainty is the uncertainty of which you, perilously, are as yet unaware [...]. (Bauman, 2010, p. 70)

So pervasive has neoliberalism become that we seldom even recognise it as an ideology. We appear to accept the proposition that this utopian, millenarian faith describes a neutral force; a kind of biological law, like Darwin's theory of evolution. But the philosophy arose as a conscious attempt to reshape human life and shift the locus of power [...]. Neoliberalism sees competition as the defining characteristic of human relations. It redefines citizens as consumers, whose democratic choices are best exercised by buying and selling, a process that rewards merit and punishes inefficiency. It maintains that “the market” delivers benefits that could never be achieved by planning. (Monbiot, April 15, 2016, para. 3-4)

There are plenty of doubts as to whether Kant's peace federation theory will come into full existence on a global scale. Wallerstein (1995) submits that liberal ideology is self-contradictory and total in that “if all humans have equal rights, we cannot maintain the kind of inegalitarian system that the capitalist world-economy has always been and always will be” (p. 161). Even one of the pillars of global

neoliberalism, The International Monetary Fund has allowed critics within its own institutional apparatus to question the neoliberal global model. Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri (2016) note

[...] there are aspects of the neoliberal agenda that have not delivered as expected. Our assessment of the agenda is confined to the effects of two policies: removing restrictions on the movement of capital across a country's borders (so-called capital account liberalization); and fiscal consolidation, sometimes called "austerity," which is shorthand for policies to reduce fiscal deficits and debt levels. An assessment of these specific policies (rather than the broad neoliberal agenda) reaches three disquieting conclusions:

- The benefits in terms of increased growth seem fairly difficult to establish when looking at a broad group of countries.
- The costs in terms of increased inequality are prominent. Such costs epitomize the trade-off between the growth and equity effects of some aspects of the neoliberal agenda.
- Increased inequality in turn hurts the level and sustainability of growth. Even if growth is the sole or main purpose of the neoliberal agenda, advocates of that agenda still need to pay attention to the distributional effects. (pp. 38–39)

In the era of neoliberalism, civil society is trumped in favor of economic rationalism. Moving beyond Foucault's *The Birth of Biopolitics* from the end of the twentieth century to the present, Debord (1967/1995) stated we live in times where "the world the spectacle holds up to view is at once here and elsewhere; it is the world of the commodity ruling over all lived experience" (p. 26). Commodity fetishism is the quasi-religion of society. Agamben (2000) (on Debord) submits that "the 'becoming-image' of capital is nothing more than the commodity's last metamorphosis, in which exchange value has completely eclipsed use value and can now achieve the status of absolute and irresponsible sovereignty over life in its entirety, after having falsified the entire social production" (p. 74.5). Similar to Foucauldian terms, civil society has been displaced by the economic rationalism of neoliberalism and globalization but is laid bare. Agamben (1993) again following Debord states:

Capitalism in its final form, he argued—radicalizing the Marxian analysis of the fetishistic character of commodities, which was foolishly neglected in those years—presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles, in which all that was directly lived is distanced in a representation. The spectacle does not simply coincide, however, with the sphere of images or with what we call today the media: It is 'a social relation among people, mediated by images,' the expropriation and the alienation of human sociality itself. Or rather, using a lapidary formula, 'the spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image.' But for that very reason, the spectacle is nothing but the pure form of separation: When the real world is transformed into an image and imag-

es become real, the practical power of humans is separated from itself and presented as a world unto itself. In the figure of this world separated and organized by the media in which the forms of the State and the economy are interwoven, the mercantile economy attains the status of absolute and irresponsible sovereignty over all social life. (p. 79, italics added for emphasis)

Civil society has been transcended by the neoliberal economic rationalism as Gilman-Opalsky (2011) analyzing Debord's work as

the spectacle [...] is [...] a worldview transposed into the very architecture of our cities and towns, ideology materialized [...] this worldview originates with those privileged enough within the political-economic structure that such satisfaction is indeed the case (in business, politics, and military). For everyone else, this worldview conditions both passive and active acceptance of the manifold of lifestyle options offered under capitalism, and rules out the destabilization of existing hierarchical structures and any scheme for the redistribution or decentralization of wealth and power [...]. Capitalism is everywhere presented, from education to advertising and political punditry, as a prerequisite for democracy, or as the same thing as democracy, or as something that necessitates democratization. Certainly this side alone exists for our neoliberal economists. But in principle, *capitalism has no substantive or procedural need for democracy*. (pp. 74–75, italics added for emphasis)

Neoliberal globalization has supplanted democracy and replaced it with an authoritarian variant formed from its economic rationalism as Guy Debord (1967/1995) submits:

The spectacle corresponds to the historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life. It is not just that the relationship to commodities is now plain to see—commodities are now all that there is to see; the world we see is the world of the commodity. *The growth of the dictatorship of modern economic production is both extensive and intensive in character*. (p. 29, italics added for emphasis)

The loss of democracy has implications in terms of foreign and domestic policy making. Hartnett and Stengrim (2006) make the case that neoliberalism/globalization via the 9-11 terrorist attacks and the George W. Bush administration—as exemplars of the phenomenon—have led to the U.S. losing its “habits of democratic integrity” and the “falsification of life” among other issues (pp. 288, 292). Using Debord in their analysis, Hartnett and Stengrim (2006) cite the spectacle of globalizing capitalism leading to an “objective force” based on fetishizing commodities through violence, thus enabling wars of aggression for material means (p. 159; Debord, 1967/1995, p. 13). The violence of globalization is shown by the U.S. government in response to the 9-11 terrorist attacks and it signifies an end to democratic governance.

7. Kant's Peace Federation Reconsidered

Immanuel Kant's league of peace ideal appears to be based on firm philosophical ground while looking at it from an eighteenth or nineteenth century perspective. Temporal and spatial considerations since have not been amenable to Kant's theory. While Kant and his advocates have posited a federation of liberal states based on the principles of representative democracy and the free market, the "spirit of trade" theme has digressed to Foucauldian neoliberalism and to an all-encompassing Debordian spectacle of globalization that undermines legitimate democracies. The marketplace ideology of neoliberalism has supplanted genuine democratic governance and discourse, making the political institutions and life of the people into an image of what it formerly was. The blurring of the distinction between Kant's concept of *civitas gentium* remains a utopian ideal far from being realized given the present and persistent dominance of neoliberalism. Foucault warned us regarding the loss of civil society to the dangers of an omnipresent neoliberal governmentality. In many respects the world today is as far away as the time of Kant insofar as achieving the ideal of *foedus pacificum*.

8. Conclusion: Implications for Public Policy in the U.S. and other Representative Democracies

The present-day environment whereby citizens ruled by neoliberal advocates in what ostensibly is a representative democracy is not conducive to effective and meaningful governance. Politicians and elected officials sound the bell of Kantian liberalism when soliciting their publics to take action—while removing the concept of neoliberalism from the public discourse. Numerous critics have attempted to lay bare the authoritarian nature of the neoliberalism phenomena. Hartnett and Stengrim (2006) have shown how the Bush administration manipulated democratic symbols on behalf of a global agenda leading to the twilight of democracy. Debord's society of the spectacle exposes the negative ramifications of the neoliberal discourse and its exploitation going largely unknown to the masses. Marcuse (1969) has called for a "new sensibility" whereby there must be an end to economic-political exploitation through a praxis that what "emerges in the struggle against violence" as the "negation of the entire Establishment, its morality, [and] culture" (p. 25). The question remains as to whether the people through their elected officials and bureaucrats (Garrett and Sementelli, 2012) will be able to attain a true democratic-republican form of government once again providing public policies that serve the political and economic interests of the people.

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